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Dual Army Career Couples: Factors Related to the Career Intentions of Men and Women

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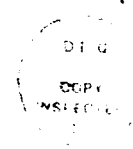
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additional factors not captured in the models tested here are salient in the career-decision process of dual Army career couples.



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Dual Army Career Couples: Factors Related to the Career Intentions of Men and Women

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FOREWORD

The Personnel Utilization Technical Area of the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences performs research on the factors that lead to retention of Army personnel. Increasingly, the Army's perspective on personnel issues reflects the awareness that soldiers are family members as well as members of the military community. The structure of an individual soldier's immediate family, as well as his or her family-related needs, concerns, and responsibilities, determines the family context within which soldiers perform their duties and make decisions about their careers. This family context and its impact on the career decisions of dual Army career soldiers are the focus of this report.

The percentage of soldiers married to fellow soldiers has increased markedly since the influx of women into the Army in the early 1970s. Individuals in dual Army career marriages are confronted with a number of difficult dilemmas to resolve, including both the coordination of their careers and the integration of their domestic and childcare responsibilities into their demanding schedules. Concerns for the well-being of dual military career soldiers and their families, as well as concerns about the impact of this demanding lifestyle on decisions to stay in the Army, have provided the impetus for the research described in this report. The findings discussed focus on the work and family-related factors associated with the decision of men and women in dual Army career marriages to stay in the Army. In the context of the larger body of on-going research on Army families and retention, this report furthers our understanding of the work/family interface and contributes to our efforts to better understand, manage, and serve the military population.

The sponsors of this research included the office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (ODCSPER), Enlisted Sustainment and Distribution Branch, and the Community and Family Support Center (CFSC). An earlier draft of this paper was forwarded to, and approved by, key personnel in these agencies. Their comments indicated that the information included in this report will be useful in the development of programs and policies for the retention and well-being of soldiers in dual Army career marriages.



EDGAR M. JOHNSON
Technical Director

DUAL ARMY CAREER COUPLES: FACTORS RELATED TO THE CAREER INTENTIONS
OF MEN AND WOMEN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Requirement:

Increasingly large numbers of soldiers are marrying fellow soldiers. Over 36,000 soldiers (approximately 6% of the active Army) are currently in a dual Army career marriage, and most of them have four or more years in service. Women are disproportionately represented in this population; just under 5% of the married men in the Army and over 60% of the married women in the Army have spouses who are also active-duty soldiers. The problems involved in coordinating two military careers are widely recognized, and the Married Army Couples Program has been implemented in an effort to help these couples find career-enhancing joint assignments. Little is known, however, about how various work and family-related factors affect the career decisions of male and female soldiers in dual Army career marriages. The need to retain highly trained soldiers and the continuing interest of the Community and Family Support Center (CFSC) in family issues provide the impetus for the present examination of the predictors of decisions to stay in the Army.

Procedure:

In 1985, surveys designed specifically to address the issues most relevant to dual Army career couples were administered to 149 officers and 405 enlisted personnel in dual Army career marriages. Slightly over half of the respondents in the sample were women, and about two thirds had a spouse who also responded to the survey. Using a series of multiple regression analyses, the relationship between career intentions and a number of work, dual Army career, and family-related factors were assessed separately for men and women.

Findings:

In the first set of regression analyses, ratings of the importance of various factors to respondents' career decisions were used as independent variables. For both men and women, the importance of pay and benefits was the strongest predictor of the intention to stay in the Army. Other work-related variables associated with career intentions included assigned post (both men and women), Army lifestyle and travel (men only), and promotion potential (women only). In addition, one of the family-related variables also accounted for a significant proportion of the variance in career intentions: Individuals who rated pregnancy concerns as an important career decision factor were less likely to intend to stay in the Army.

In the second set of regression equations, satisfaction with Army life and a set of five family-related factors were used as independent variables.

As expected, Army satisfaction was the strongest predictor of retention intentions for both men and women. The family-related variables accounting for variance in career intentions over and above the effects of satisfaction with the Army included spouse support (for men only), feelings that the Army tries to accommodate dual Army career couples, and the belief that children suffer when both parents are in the Army (women only). Analyses were replicated, controlling for years in service and officer/enlisted status, and results were essentially the same.

Utilization of Findings:

This study indicates that family-related concerns do affect the career intentions of soldiers in dual Army career marriages. The specific findings can be used to inform decision makers about the impact and importance of policies aimed at dual career couples (e.g., the Married Army Couples Program) and can be used to support CFSC's efforts to design and defend programs responsive to the needs of this special segment of the Army population.

DUAL ARMY CAREER COUPLES: FACTORS RELATED TO THE CAREER INTENTIONS
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DUAL ARMY CAREER COUPLES:
FACTORS RELATED TO THE CAREER INTENTIONS OF MEN AND WOMEN

INTRODUCTION

The number of soldiers married to fellow soldiers has increased dramatically in the past decade, an almost inevitable outcome of the influx of women into the Army following the advent of the All Volunteer Force in 1973. The emergence of this phenomenon has given rise to three areas of concern: the readiness and deployability of soldiers in families where both spouses are active duty soldiers, the formulation of appropriate assignment and personnel policies, and the quality of life and retention of soldiers in dual Army career marriages. The research discussed below addresses issues relevant to the third concern, the retention of dual Army career soldiers.

The literature review focuses specifically on those studies which have examined dual military career couples. The civilian literature is replete with studies documenting the role conflicts and strains of the dual career lifestyle in general. Dual Army career couples, however, are beset by a number of career and family pressures unique to their dual military status. The military is a "greedy institution" (Segal, 1986), which makes great demands on an individual's time and energy, yet allows the service member little freedom to work out individual patterns of accommodation to conflicting work and family demands. Consequently, the factors dual military career couples consider in making career decisions are likely to be different from the criteria considered by both civilian dual careerists and service members who are single or married to civilians. The present research is an attempt to identify some of the factors especially relevant to the career decisions of this unique subgroup of soldiers.

The Dual Army Career Couple Population

By early 1987, the Military Personnel Center reported that over 5000 officers and more than 31,000 enlisted personnel were currently enrolled in the Married Army Couples program. This program was designed specifically for dual Army couples in an attempt to maximize the opportunity for married Army couples to be assigned together and establish a common household (joint domicile). About 5% of total active force of the Army is currently enrolled in this program. The actual percentage of dual Army couples may be even higher, however, because of delays in registering for the Married Army Couples program. A 1983 representative sample survey of the Army indicated that over 6% of the active force in 1983 was in a dual Army career marriage (Raiha, 1986). More specific breakdowns from this survey indicated that of the married population in the Army, almost 8% of the officers and 12% of the enlisted soldiers were married to someone who was also in the Army.

Dual Army career couples are found primarily within the lower and mid-level ranks of the Army (Raiha, 1986). Among enlisted dual Army couples, 65% are either E-4's or E-5's, and among officers, 75% are lieutenants or captains. Compared to married soldiers who are not in dual Army marriages, the dual Army careerists are slightly younger, have less time in service, and are less likely to have children (Raiha, 1986). The relative youth of dual Army career soldiers is attributable in part, at least, to the small number of women, relative to men, who have been in the service long enough to have advanced to

the higher ranks. The concentration of dual Army couples in the junior ranks of the Army suggests that unless these individuals have exceptionally high divorce or service separation rates, the percentage of dual career couples in the Army is likely to continue to increase.

In order to better understand, manage, and support dual Army career couples, we need to address several broad issues. First, how does being married to a fellow soldier affect an individual's career progression, and his or her career intentions with regard to the Army? Is the effect different for male and female soldiers? What impact does dual career status have on the family life of these couples? And how do dual Army couples feel about both the Army in general and the particular assignment policies that affect their lives? Information on the factors affecting the career intentions of female dual Army career soldiers is especially crucial, since within the smaller pool of female officers, a higher percentage are currently in dual Army marriages.

Raiha's (1986) analyses of the 1983 representative sample survey indicated that over 60% of all married female soldiers were in dual Army career marriages, versus fewer than 5% of all married male soldiers. More specifically, within the married enlisted population, 63% of the women, compared to 7% of the men were in dual Army marriages; within the married officer population, fully 68% of the women, versus only 4% of the men were married to fellow officers.

The disproportionate number of women in dual military marriages is not unique to the Army. A study of family demographics in the Air Force found that 76% of the Air Force women who were married (including both enlisted and officer personnel) had spouses who were also in the military (Carr, Orthner and Brown, 1980). Similarly, research on a stratified random sample of Navy personnel indicated that 56% of the Navy women who were married were in dual Navy marriages (Farkas and Durning, 1982). Interestingly, the Navy study also found that 85% of the Navy women with civilian spouses reported that their husbands had prior military experience (75% in the Navy). More women than current figures indicate may have been involved in dual military marriages at some point in their lives.

The issues surrounding dual military career marriages are not "women's issues" per se; however, it is apparent that a much larger percentage of women than men are affected by both the problems and opportunities inherent in this lifestyle. Investigations into the attitudes, career progression, and career intentions of men and women in the Army cannot afford to ignore the family context within which soldiers evaluate their options and make their career decisions. In the present research, insights derived from a comparison of dual military career men and women can help us clarify some of the ways women and men within similar family contexts differ with regard to the factors that contribute to their career decisions.

Below, the limited literature on dual military career couples is reviewed. Also included are several relevant studies addressing the impact of a spouse's attitudes on the career intentions of a service member. The review focuses on identifying the factors previous studies have found to be related to the career decisions of individuals in dual military career marriages.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature on dual military career couples stems largely from studies focusing on family issues in general. Within this stream of literature, Orthner and his associates have conducted two ambitious studies of military families (Carr, Orthner and Brown, 1980; Orthner, 1980; Orthner and Bowen, 1982). In the original "Families in Blue" study (Orthner, 1980), a representative sample of 331 Air Force families living together in CONUS or Germany were selected for interviews. Of these families, 44 (13%) were dual Air Force couples (both husband and wife in the active Air Force). This study was replicated with a stratified probability sample of 597 Air Force families living together on bases in the Pacific in 1981 (Orthner and Bowen, 1982). Dual military career families were oversampled in this study to allow for separate analyses, resulting in a final subsample of 143 dual military couples.

Dual Air Force career couples were also the subject of a small pilot study conducted by Williams in 1978. William's (1978) sample was nonrepresentative in that it included only officer couples in which both spouses intended to make the Air Force a career. However, the interviews with this small group of highly committed officers provide some interesting insights into the problems such couples encounter in attempting to combine military careers with a "normal" married life.

Farkas and Durning (1982) also obtained a sample of dual military career couples in their 1979 survey of a stratified random sample of male and female, officer and enlisted personnel in the Navy. Included in their final sample of 701 individuals were 129 respondents with military spouses and 222 respondents with working civilian spouses. The analyses involving dual military couples in this study consisted largely of comparing respondents with Navy spouses to respondents with civilian working spouses.

Two studies have focused on dual military career couples within the Army. Raiha's (1986) analysis of the Army's 1983 sample survey of the active Army population offers an examination of a representative sample of individuals in dual Army career marriages. Respondents with spouses who were also in the Army were identified (290 officers and 1061 enlisted personnel), and responses to a variety of demographic, attitudinal, and behavioral measures were compared across single, married but not dual Army, and married dual Army career respondents. A second study (Teplitzky, Thomas and Nogami, 1987) focused specifically on dual Army career officers, sampling from the population of dual Army career officer couples currently assigned to the same post. In this study, male and female responses to a number of attitudinal and career intentions items were compared. This sample of dual Army career officers was combined with a parallel sample of dual Army enlisted couples to provide the larger sample used in the analyses described in this report.

The review of the dual military career research is organized around five major topics relevant to the present research: career intentions, spouse support, family separations, pregnancy and childcare concerns and other dual career/marriage concerns.

Career Intentions

Women in dual military career marriages are less likely than men to indicate that they intend to remain in the service until retirement. For example, in two samples of dual Air Force career couples, about 25% more men than women intended to stay in the service until retirement (Orthner, 1980; Orthner and Bowen, 1982). Similarly, in a representative sample of the active Army population, women in dual Army career marriages were less likely than their male counterparts to voice intentions to stay in the Army (Raiha, 1986). Comparisons with other Army subgroups indicated that male and female dual Army career soldiers were more likely than single soldiers, but less likely than soldiers married to civilians to intend to stay in the Army (Raiha, 1986).

Women in dual military career samples tend to be younger and have less time in service than their male counterparts (Raiha, 1986; Teplitzky, Thomas and Nogami, 1987), raising the possibility that differences in career intentions may be due in part, at least, to differences in the time men and women have invested in the Army. To examine this possibility, Teplitzky et al. (1987) computed the percentages of men and women intending to stay in the Army separately for male and female officers in the early, middle and later stages of their careers. There were too few respondents in each group (cell sizes ranged from 10 to 31, averaging 18.5) to warrant drawing firm conclusions on the basis of these analyses, however, the results suggested a trend worthy of further exploration. The career intentions of male and female officers were markedly different early in their careers; almost three times as many men as women intended to stay in the Army until retirement in both the 1-3 and 4-6 "years in service" categories. The differences in career intentions disappeared, however, among the men and women with seven or more years in service. At the 7-9 year point in their careers, about two thirds of both the men and women were intending to stay, and nearly everyone with 10 or more years of service had decided to make the Army a career. These results remain to be confirmed in larger samples, yet they suggest that male and female officers in dual Army career marriages may differ in the way they make their career decisions. The majority of male officers appear to enter the Army having already made the decision to make the Army a career. The majority of female officers, on the other hand, appear to enter the Army with a "wait and see" attitude; most report being undecided about their future in the Army in their early years. The early experiences of women may shape their assessments of the viability of the dual Army career lifestyle given their career and family goals, and these evaluations may be the primary determinant of their subsequent decisions to either leave the Army or make it a career. Women who decide to stay in the Army beyond their first obligation, however, appear to be just as committed as their male counterparts to staying in the Army until retirement.

Spouse Support

A number of retention studies focusing on military personnel in general, as opposed to individuals in dual military career marriages, highlight the importance of career support to one's decision to stay in the military. In a large study of Army families at Ft. Benning, Georgia, Orthner and his associates (1985) found that spouse support was more strongly related to the decision to stay in the Army than any other facet of Army life. In a similar

vein, Farkas and Durning (1982) reported that family pressure to leave was second only to job satisfaction as a predictor of the intention to stay in the Navy. In a different Navy retention study, Mohr, Holzbach, and Morrison (1981) found that junior naval officers whose wives were supportive of their careers expressed stronger intentions to stay than officers whose wives were neutral or antagonistic toward their careers. Seboda and Szoc's (1984) extended this line of research, examining the relationship between spouse attitudes and actual retention behavior. Over 90% of the Navy officers and enlisted personnel whose spouses were supportive of their careers extended their obligations. However, only 55% of the enlisted personnel and 71% of the officers extended their tours when spouses preferred that they leave.

Evidence of a similar relationship between career intentions and spouse support has also been found in a dual military career sample. In a dual military career sample where 66% of the men and 43% of the women, overall, planned to make the Air Force a career, only 26% of the men and 30% of the women whose spouses did not support their careers intended to stay (Orthner, 1980). The relationship between spouse support and career intentions may explain some of the disparity between men and women in terms of their commitment to a military career. In Orthner's (1980; Orthner and Bowen, 1982) studies of dual Air Force career couples, slightly over half of the husbands reported that their spouses were strongly supportive of their careers compared to about one third of the women. There was a strong correlation for both men and women between the level of spouse support they received and their decision to stay in the Air Force (Orthner, 1980).

The level of support Air Force women receive appears to be related to both the nature of their jobs and the values of their husbands with regard to the role of women in the family. Husbands with more traditional sex-role attitudes and family values, and husbands whose wives hold especially demanding jobs (e.g. extensive TDY, extra duty, long work weeks) are less likely be supportive of their wives' careers (Orthner, 1980; Orthner and Bowen, 1982).

Family Separations

Long or frequent family separations are not uncommon in the military. However, when both spouses are subject to the demands of a military career the likelihood that spouses will have to spend time living apart is especially high. Individuals in the military generally have only a limited number of assignment options at any point in their careers. Military needs and prescribed career paths may require spouses to accept assignments at different locations if they want to maximize their career potential. In other cases, individuals may have incompatible military specialties; a post that has a need for the skills of one spouse may have no positions requiring the skills of the other spouse. Difficulties obtaining career enhancing joint assignments can lead to involuntary family separations or a situation where one spouse has to accept a less desirable position in order to maintain a common household.

Problems coordinating careers and obtaining joint assignments not only add to the stress experienced by dual military couples (Williams, 1978), they also lead some couples to conclude that one or both spouses should leave the service. Nearly 90% of the dual Navy career couples in the Farkas and Durning

(1982) study reported difficulty in finding joint work assignments; and 37% of these couples said that one or both spouses would leave the Navy if one partner were assigned to a location where a suitable position for the other could not be arranged. The reluctance to accept a long separation from one's spouse is even more pronounced in a more recent examination of dual military career couples in the Army. Only 24% of the female officers and 34% of the male officers in the Teplitzky et al. (1987) study said that they would accept a separation of one year or more from their spouse.

Data also suggest that when a separation is unacceptable, the wife in a dual military career family is considerably more likely than the husband to be the one to sacrifice her career. In Farkas and Durning's (1982) study, for example, only 5% of the women in dual Navy career marriages indicated that their careers would take precedence over their husbands' in the event of a conflict, compared to 30% who said that their husbands' careers would come first (the remainder said that the two careers carried equal weight). Similarly, 44% of the women in dual Army career couples versus only 17% of the men said that they would be the ones to leave if the couple were faced with a long separation (Teplitzky et al., 1987). It is noteworthy, however, that among the officers with six or fewer years in service, about one third of the male officers (compared to about half of the female officers) said that they would leave the Army if a long separation appeared inevitable. Men, as well as women, in today's Army (at least those in dual Army career marriages) may be less willing than their predecessors to endure long family separations. When they are still at an early stage in their careers, the prospect of family separations may be an important factor in the decisions of both men and women concerning the desirability of an Army career.

Childcare/Pregnancy Concerns

Concerns about children have typically been cast in the light of daycare problems and the time pressures of the dual career lifestyle. Interviews with female dual career Army officers suggest that these are indeed serious concerns for a number of women (Teplitzky et al., 1987). The long work hours and unpredictable schedules inherent in the military lifestyle make both childcare and finding enough time to devote to families important issues. However, women have also expressed concern about the effects of pregnancy and children on their careers. The highly committed dual Air Force career women in William's (1978) study felt that children would limit their career potential. This was the main reason given by the women in this sample for their decision not to have children. Yet, despite their attempts to make their career commitment evident to their peers and superiors, many of the women felt that their careers were not taken seriously. Women reported that many men in the Army believe that most married women in the military will eventually get pregnant and leave the service. This attitude appears to result in feelings that women are not as interested in, or deserving of advancement as men. Comments from female officers in the dual Army career interview sample reflect similar sentiments (Teplitzky et al., 1987). Several women noted that there is a bias against pregnant women in the Army, and pregnant officers, in particular, are likely to be perceived as either not being serious about their careers, or as not being able to perform their jobs properly. The survey data from this research indicated that "the Army view of pregnancy" was the aspect of Army life with

which female officers were least satisfied (tied for last place with childcare concerns).

There are indications that a number of women in the military feel that they must choose between having families and having a military career. Comparisons of dual Air Force couples and "traditional" Air Force couples (Air Force husband, civilian wife) revealed that the two groups were demographically similar except in the number of children they had. Fully 80% of the officer/officer marriages and 69% of the marriages between enlisted personnel were childless (Carr, Orthner and Brown, 1980). This is in marked contrast to an overall childless rate of about 30% for traditional Air Force couples. Furthermore, Orthner (1980) found that childless married women were those most likely to want to make the Air Force a career, and demographic studies indicate that the proportion of divorced and single women in the Air Force is twice that of their civilian counterparts in the same age brackets (Howell, 1986). Raiha (1986) noted that the women who have reached the higher enlisted and officer ranks in the Army tend to be single and childless.

While it is clear that childcare and pregnancy concerns are salient to many women in the military, we need to be careful about making broad generalizations about the importance of these issues. Some women in the military are choosing to forego having children, either for personal reasons or to devote their time and energy to their careers. Concerns about pregnancy and childcare will be largely irrelevant to these women (although they might not have been had they felt that combining a military career with children was a viable option). Statements suggesting that women, in general, subordinate their careers to family concerns are unfair to the women who are dedicating themselves to their careers, and fighting such stereotypes in the process. On the other hand, the needs of those women who are interested in combining family and career should not be overlooked. It is suggested here that we recognize two distinct subgroups of military women, those who want and intend to have children, and those who have decided not to have children. When both types of women are included in a sample, responses to items regarding the importance of child related factors are likely to be bimodally distributed. For example, Teplitzky et al. (1987) found that childcare concerns were likely to be rated either as "not important at all" (38%), or as "very important" (also 38%) by female dual Army career officers. When responses are clustered at the extreme ends of the scale, the mean will be in the neutral range, giving a misleading representation of the feelings of the "average" women.

In summary, there is evidence that childcare and pregnancy concerns are very important to some women, but at the same time there are a number of women for whom these issues are not salient. We need to be cautious in interpreting means for such items and recognize differences across subgroups of women.

Other Dual Career/Marriage Concerns

Another dilemma more likely to be faced by women than men in dual military couples stems from traditional organizational expectations concerning the role of a military wife. Wives of officers and higher ranking enlisted personnel are typically expected to serve their husbands careers by fulfilling a variety of social obligations. Women who have their own demanding careers are not

likely to have the time to take care of the traditional obligations of a military wife. Several of the female officers in William's (1978) study expressed concern that their inability to function as "traditional" Army wives could hurt their husbands' careers. It is also conceivable that a female officer's career could be hurt by the lack of a spouse to fill the traditional officer's wife role.

A more general problem experienced by dual military career couples is simply the lack of time to meet all the demands of work and family life. Time constraints contribute to a number of more specific concerns (e.g., not having enough time for children, inability to participate in social functions). Orthner (1980, 1982) suggested that marital problems (specifically lack of companionship and sexual intimacy) may also be experienced by dual military couple as a consequence of the limited amount of time they are able to spend together. Long work weeks, extensive TDY, shifting schedules, and separations were the quality of life issues of most concern to Orthner's married samples as a whole, and these problems and their consequences are likely to be intensified when both spouses are subject to the demands of military life.

Conclusions

We know very little about the dynamics of the career decision making processes of dual Army career couples. The limited literature in this area does, however, suggest a number of factors dual military career couples appear to consider when making their career and family decisions. Spouse support, the possibility of family separations, difficulties coordinating two careers, concerns about pregnancy and childcare, and time constraints in general appear to be especially salient considerations for individuals in dual military career marriages.

The factors identified in this literature review go well beyond the range of issues typically addressed in studies of retention. Traditional efforts to understand and predict military retention focus on variables specifically related to the work context (e.g., pay and bonuses, job satisfaction, feelings about the organization). However, these models appear inadequate to explain the career decisions of dual Army career soldiers. Interviews and surveys of these couples suggest that dual careerists, and women in dual military career marriages in particular, make career decisions in the context of family goals and constraints. Job characteristics that have implications for family life, and family characteristics that impinge on careers may be at least as relevant to the career decisions of men and women in dual Army career families as the pay and satisfaction variables typically addressed.

The analyses in the present research are designed to examine the relationship between the set of variables discussed above and the retention intentions of male and female soldiers in dual Army career marriages. It is hypothesized that these dual career and family factors will show a relationship to career intentions over and above the effects of traditional job-related predictors of retention. It is further hypothesized that the items most directly related to family concerns will be stronger predictors of the career intentions of women than men.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and Procedure

Interviews. Exploratory, preliminary interviews were conducted in early 1985 with 8 dual Army officer couples and 11 dual Army enlisted couples from four CONUS installations. The interviews were conducted individually with each spouse and the confidentiality of responses was emphasized. The average session lasted about two hours and included a discussion of: Army career plans, areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the Army, opinions about personnel policies relevant to dual Army couples, feelings about child care problems and facilities, and the impact of family concerns on reenlistment and retention decisions. Information from the interviews was used to develop a survey that addressed the issues of particular relevance to dual Army career couples. This survey was subsequently administered to a larger sample.

Surveys. Surveys were administered to 149 officers (67 males, 82 females) and 405 enlisted personnel (193 males, 212 females) in dual Army career marriages. The surveys were administered in group sessions at each of 9 CONUS installations (Forts Bliss, McClellan, Jackson, Carson, Campbell, Bragg, Lewis, Ord and Hood). The questionnaires took between one and two hours to complete, and respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. The topics covered in the surveys were similar to those addressed in the interviews.

Sample characteristics. Within both the male and female samples, approximately three fourths of the respondents were enlisted personnel. Men in the sample had served an average nine years in the Army, while the average for women was just under six years. The couples in the sample had been married an average of four years, and for 80% of the women and 72% of the men their current marriage was their first. Close to 90% of both the men and women reported that their spouse was already in the Army when they met. Fifty percent (50%) of the women and 56% of the men in the sample reported that they had one or more children living at home with them. Enlisted personnel were more likely than officers to have children, but across both the enlisted and officer subgroups, the majority of people with children had only one.

Sample selection and limitations. For both the interviews and the surveys, participants were initially selected from lists of dual Army career couples provided by the Military Personnel Center (MILPERCEN). Names were included on these lists only if they met two criteria. First, both spouses had to be enrolled in the Married Army Couples program (enrollment is mandatory for soldiers married to other soldiers, but some may avoid or delay registering). Second, both spouses had to be currently assigned to the same post so that each could complete a survey. The requirement that both spouses be assigned to the same post eliminated from the survey population the approximately 30% of the couples in the Married Army Couples Program who could not be assigned together. Those most likely to be separated are the more senior level personnel for whom there are a limited number of positions, and soldier couples in unusual or incompatible occupational specialties.

Researchers attempted to select couples randomly from the lists provided by MILPERCEN, however, when a couple was either no longer at the specified post, or no longer married, replacement couples were selected on-site from more up-to-date lists provided by the individual posts. Individuals were called in the order in which their names appeared on the updated lists, and they were asked to report to the survey administration room at a certain time.

As noted above, the original plan was to collect data only from couples where both spouses were available. In about one third of the cases, however, one spouse was unable to appear at the scheduled time to complete the survey. In order to avoid a large reduction in the total sample size, the requirement that both spouses be available was relaxed for the surveys. In the final sample, 66% of both the officer and enlisted samples consisted of married couples (both spouses responding). The remaining respondents were married to soldiers who were selected for, but unable to participate in the survey.

Because the nonavailability of respondents was often related to job demands, individuals in jobs requiring frequent travel, field duty or critical tasks (i.e., they cannot leave for the purpose of taking a survey) may be under represented in the present sample. In addition, it must be remembered that dual career couples who were not assigned to the same post were excluded from the sampling frame. An important implication of both of these sample limitations is that problems concerning family separations are likely to be under reported relative to their actual occurrence in the total population of dual Army career families.

Measures

Dependent Variable. The dependent variable for all the regression analyses was an indicator of commitment to an Army career. Respondents were asked to indicate their current career intentions by selecting one of seven response alternatives. For the purposes of the regression analysis, the seven options were collapsed into three categories:

5) Stay till retire, consisting only of the alternative:

- a) stay in the Army until retirement

3) Undecided, consisting of 2 alternatives:

- b) stay after completion of obligation, but undecided about staying until retirement
- c) I am undecided about action after present obligation

1) Probably/definitely leave, consisting of 4 alternatives:

- d) probably leave upon completion of present obligation
- e) definitely leave upon completion of present obligation
- f) probably leave before the end of present obligation
- g) definitely leave before the end of present obligation

Independent Variables. Two different sets of independent variables were used in two different sets of regression analyses. Items used in the first set of analyses consisted of ratings of the importance (1="not important at all" to 4="very important") of 23 aspects of Army and family life to the decisions individuals had made with regard to staying in the Army. From the set of 23 items, four scales were extracted on the basis of a priori content analyses and internal consistency reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha). This resulted in a final set of 10 variables, including four multi-item scales and six single item measures. The four scales were:

1) Extrinsic factors ($\alpha=.76$)

5 items: pay; benefits; quality of medical, dental and dependent care; amount of time spent in Army; and job security

2) Army lifestyle ($\alpha=.73$)

4 items: feelings about the Army; Army leadership; Army lifestyle (i.e., environment, organizational structure, discipline); and people in work environment

3) Assignment and marriage concerns ($\alpha=.74$)

5 items: assignments; marriage concerns; joint domicile; Army's view of dual Army couples; and family life in general

4) Concerns about pregnancy ($\alpha=.76$)

2 items: pregnancy, and Army's view of pregnant women

Single items included importance ratings of: job, promotion potential, child care concerns, travel, living quarters, and assigned post.

The dependent variable was regressed on this set of 10 independent variables to assess the relative contribution of the various work and family related factors to the decision to stay in the Army. It was hypothesized that at least some of the family related factors (assignment and marriage concerns, and concerns about childcare and pregnancy) would account for a significant proportion of the variance in career intentions, independent of the expected contribution of work related variables. Individuals who assigned a higher importance rating to family concerns were expected to be less likely to be planning on an Army career.

The second set of regression analyses were conducted with a separate set of independent variables, ratings of satisfaction with the Army and five dual career/family concern items. The purpose of this set of regressions was to examine the contribution of family and dual career concerns to retention intentions over and above the contribution of satisfaction with the Army in general.

The Army satisfaction variable was a multi-item scale ($\alpha=.79$), comprised of satisfaction ratings (1="very dissatisfied", 4="very satisfied")

of four aspects of Army life: feelings about Army; Army leadership; Army lifestyle (i.e. environment, organizational structure, discipline) and people in the work environment. The Army satisfaction item was selected for inclusion in the regression analysis because it was the best work related predictor of retention intentions. In preliminary analyses, retention intentions were regressed on four variables measuring satisfaction with different aspects of the Army (pay and benefits, job, promotion potential, and the Army satisfaction measure). Across the four male/female, officer/enlisted subgroups only the Army satisfaction measure emerged as a significant independent predictor of career intentions when all four variables were allowed to enter the regression equation. Army satisfaction accounted for 15% to 20% of the variance in career intentions.

The other variables included in this second set of regression equations consisted of dual career and family related items that appear to play a role in career decisions of dual Army couples (especially women). The specific items included:

- 1) Concerns about Children: "Children suffer when both parents are in the Army" (4 point agree-disagree scale)
- 2) Concerns about Pregnancy: "The Army's view of pregnant women" (4 point satisfied-dissatisfied scale)
- 3) Army Accommodates Dual Military Couples: "The Army does try to accommodate dual Army soldiers" (4 point agree-disagree scale)
- 4) Lost Opportunities: "Joint assignments usually mean that one of us loses the opportunity for a good assignment" (4 point agree-disagree scale)
- 5) Spouse support: "How much does your spouse support your career intentions" (4 point support-does not support scale)

This set of six items (the five dual career and family related items and the Army satisfaction measure) were used to test the hypothesis that career and family concerns will account for variance in the career intentions of dual Army careerists over and above the expected strong effects of global satisfaction with the Army. In both sets of regression analyses the family factors were expected to be more strongly related to the career intentions of women than men in dual Army career marriages.

Data Analysis

The hypotheses based on both sets of independent variables were tested using stepwise multiple regression. The analyses were conducted separately for men and women to allow comparisons of the predictors of the career intentions of men and women in similar family situations. In addition, all the regression analyses were replicated controlling for the effects of time in service and officer/enlisted status. In these supplementary analyses (Tables 9 through 12), years in service and officer/enlisted status were entered first in

the regression equations. These variables were selected as controls because both are associated with systematic variations in retention intentions and they are moderately related to some of the independent variables. Soldiers with more years in service are more likely to be planning on a career in the Army, and officers, relative to enlisted personnel are more likely to have a strong commitment to an Army career. Controlling for the effects of these demographic variables affords a more stringent test of the hypotheses, since these controls reduce the amount of unexplained variance in the dependent variable. Only variables for which the increment in the explained variance was significant (i.e., the change in the R^2 was significant at the .05 level) were interpreted as significant predictors of career intentions.

RESULTS

Intercorrelations, means and standard deviations of the two sets of independent variables are presented in Tables 1 through 4. Most of the importance ratings (see Tables 1 and 2) displayed low to moderate intercorrelations. Only three of the 90 correlations were higher than .50. The intercorrelations of the variables used in the second set of regression equations are shown in Tables 3 and 4. The majority of these correlations are not significant.

Regressions of Importance Items

Results of the regression analyses using the importance items are presented in Tables 5 and 6. For both male and female dual career soldiers, the importance assigned to pay and benefits was the best predictor of career intentions, accounting for 12% and 19% of the variance in the male and female samples, respectively. Soldiers who said that such things as pay, retirement benefits, job security and quality of medical care (the items comprising this scale) were important factors in their career decision were more likely to have plans to stay in the Army. In addition, importance ratings of assigned post, Army lifestyle and travel were related to the career intentions of men. For women, the work related variables associated with the dependent variable included promotion potential and assigned post. The relationship between retention intentions and all of the work related importance ratings was positive (i.e., higher importance was associated with intention to stay) except in the case of assigned post. Men and women who said that the post they were assigned to was an important career decision factor were less likely to be planning on a career in the Army.

There were three dual career/family related variables among the 10 variables proposed for entry in the regression equation: importance of childcare concerns, pregnancy concerns, and dual career marriage concerns (e.g. joint domicile, marriage, assignments). Of these, only the item reflecting the importance of pregnancy concerns accounted for significant variance in retention intentions. Somewhat surprisingly, pregnancy concerns accounted for almost as much variance in retention intentions for men (2%) as women (3%). Both men and women who said that pregnancy and "Army views of pregnant women" were important career decision factors were less likely to intend to stay.

Regressions of Army Satisfaction and Dual Career/Family Concern Items

Results of the regressions using the Army satisfaction and the five dual career/family concern items are reported in Tables 7 and 8. As expected, satisfaction with the Army was a significant predictor of career intentions for both male and female dual career soldiers, accounting for 14% and 18% of the variance in retention intentions for men and women, respectively. In addition, at least one of the additional dual career/family concern items entered the equation for both men and women. Among male dual career soldiers, those who reported that their spouses strongly supported their career intentions were more likely to intend to stay in the Army (3% of the variance accounted for). Among women, the belief that the Army tries to accommodate dual career couples was associated with higher commitment to an Army career (3% of the variance), while the belief that "children suffer when both parents are in the Army" was associated with lower levels of commitment (2% of the variance).

Results Controlling for Time in Service and Enlisted/Officer Status

Results of the regressions including the years in service and enlisted/officer status control variables are presented in Tables 9 through 12. For men, years in service accounted for 11% of the variance in retention intentions, and officer/enlisted status accounted for 17% of the variance. Among women, the variance in career intentions explained by years in service was slightly higher (16%) than in the male sample, and the effect of officer/enlisted status was comparable (19% accounted for).

The results of the regressions using the control variables are nearly identical to the results obtained without the control variables. The percentage of variance accounted for by both the work-related and the dual career/family type of items is generally lower when the control variables are included, but the same dual career/family variables emerge as significant predictors across all four analyses.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The predictors of career intentions for men and women in dual Army career couples were quite similar, dominated by remuneration considerations and global satisfaction with the Army. Women did, however, appear to be more sensitive to the efforts of the Army to accommodate dual Army career couples (those who perceived the Army as being supportive were more likely to intend to stay) and more influenced by concerns about the well-being of children in dual Army marriages (those who believed that children suffer when both parents are in the Army were more likely to be planning to leave). It is noteworthy, however, that both spouse support and concerns about pregnancy were significant retention predictors for men. The importance of spouse support is consistent with the growing evidence in the retention literature that spouse attitudes influence decisions to stay in the Army. The pregnancy effect, on the other hand, is not so easily explained. One interpretation is that men for whom the Army's view of pregnant women is important have a family orientation which is inconsistent with norms and demands of Army life, and thus are less likely to

see themselves pursuing a lifelong career in the Army. Another possibility is that there are a number of young dual Army career couples who are planning to have families (hence the importance of pregnancy concerns), and when the Army is judged to be inhospitable to pregnant women, both spouses, rather than just the wife, lean towards leaving. There is some support for this speculation in the fact that the pregnancy item was also associated with retention intentions for women, and the career intentions of the partners in dual Army career couples were moderately correlated. In this sample, the correlation between the career intentions of the respondent and the career intentions of the respondent's spouse (as reported by the respondent) was .45 for men, and .36 for women. With regard to the importance of pregnancy however, it must be pointed out that in the second set of regressions, the item assessing satisfaction with the Army views of pregnant women was not significantly associated with retention intentions.

As noted above, in addition to the item assessing the importance of pregnancy concerns, two other family related items were associated with the retention intentions of women in dual Army career marriages. One item, the belief that the Army tries to accommodate dual career couples, appears to reflect faith in the good intentions of the Army with respect to joint assignments. However, a more specific item assessing the belief that joint assignments usually mean that one spouse loses a good career opportunity was not strongly related to either the Army accommodation item ($r = -.12$) or career intentions ($r = -.11$). Beliefs that joint assignments usually mean a lost career opportunity for one spouse might be more prevalent, and more strongly related to feelings about pursuing an Army career, among couples who have been separated (underrepresented in this sample because of the exclusion of couples currently living apart) and those more senior in rank, for whom career enhancing opportunities are more limited. In any case, the data do suggest that the perception that the Army is concerned about dual career couples is important to the career decisions of women in dual Army career marriages.

The third family oriented item associated with retention among female dual careerists was the belief that children suffer when both parents are in the Army. This belief, held by slightly over 50% of all the male and female respondents, may reflect either a fairly objective assessment of the time and energy demands of a military career, or a more personal value concerning the appropriateness of a mother working when her children are young. Future researchers may want to further explore the basis of this perception, because to the extent that such beliefs are the result of Army policies or lack of support services (as opposed to personal values), modifications within the system may have a positive effect on retention.

In summary, the regression analyses offer modest support for the contention that dual career marriage and family concerns play a part in the career intentions of dual Army career soldiers. The percentage of variance accounted for by the family and dual career oriented items was quite small (only 1 to 3 percent), but the fact that career/family concerns were related to career intentions even when the effects of time in service and important work-related variables were controlled suggests that this is an area worthy of further exploration. The inclusion of two different sets of independent variables, one focusing on the importance of different aspects of Army life, and the second

focusing on attitudes and beliefs also lends credibility to the findings. The overall results do not appear to be just an artifact of a particular combination of variables or a certain type of item. However, the differences in the types of items emerging as important in the two sets of regressions suggest that it may be useful in the beginning stages of future research in this area to devote attention to the consequences of using different measurement frameworks.

There are also several factors which suggest that the results of the present study should be regarded as merely tentative at this point. Reliance on single item measures of the dual career/family variables is clearly a weakness within the present research. Relevant constructs relating to the variables shown to be promising in this and other research need to be clearly specified and reliably measured. A second weakness lies in the limitations of the present sample. Only dual career couples currently residing on the same post were included in this study. As a result, problems with regard to joint domicile are less likely to have been experienced by the couples in this sample, and this may have accounted for the failure to find effects for the dual career assignment and marriage concerns variable. The sample was also limited in that it was too small to allow for separate analyses of the officer and enlisted populations. These two groups are quite dissimilar in terms of their demographics and the nature of their Army jobs, and officers and enlisted personnel may consider different factors or weight factors differently when they make decisions about staying in the Army.

Future researchers may also want to consider developing measures which will allow us to distinguish between the women for whom children are a salient issue (i.e. wanting or intending to have children, children living at home) and those for whom child-related concerns are not an issue (i.e. don't want children, unable to have children, children are grown or living with other parent). Such measures would provide data on the percentage of dual Army career women who are potentially concerned with pregnancy and child-related issues, and enable us to better understand the impact of these concerns for different groups of women.

A final consideration in the present research is the small percentage of variance in career intentions accounted for by the combination of work and dual career/family related variables. Even when time in service was included in regression equations, the proportion of variance explained in the dependent variable did not exceed 39%. This suggests that important career decision factors were not captured in the models tested here. Future research on the ways dual Army career couples, as family units, negotiate career decisions and weigh family and career options would be especially useful.

In short, the present research, alone, cannot provide definitive answers about the factors determining the career decisions of dual Army career couples. This research does, however, suggest that marriage and family concerns enter into the career decisions of both men and women in dual Army career couples, and that additional research to uncover the more specific factors and decision processes involved in these decisions is warranted.

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Table 1
Male Dual Army Career Soldiers:
Means and Intercorrelations of Items in the Importance Regressions

<u>Variables</u>	Mean (S.D.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Pay, benefits	3.36 (.87)										
2. Army Lifestyle	3.21 (.57)	55									
3. Dual career/marriage concerns	3.52 (.55)	47	50								
4. Pregnancy concerns	2.31 (1.12)	21	26	31							
5. Job	3.67 (.59)	26	38	19	15						
6. Promotion potential	3.61 (.69)	44	46	37	20	28					
7. Childcare concerns	2.89 (1.23)	32	27	38	36	14	27				
8. Travel	2.93 (.93)	32	25	23	14	12	21	12			
9. Quarters	2.92 (1.11)	37	33	33	30	18	28	45	14		
10. Assigned post	2.99 (.95)	29	38	41	18	23	22	20	38	38	
11. Retention Intentions	3.96 (1.46)	35	25	11	ns	ns	12	ns	15	ns	ns

Note: Decimals are omitted; all reported correlations are significant ($p < .05$).

Table 2
Female Dual Army Career Soldiers:
Means and Intercorrelations of Items in the Importance Regressions

<u>Variables</u>	Mean (S.D.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Pay, benefits	3.32 (.63)										
2. Army Lifestyle	3.28 (.59)	48									
3. Dual career/marriage concerns	3.64 (.49)	46	40								
4. Pregnancy concerns	2.75 (1.09)	23	25	36							
5. Job	3.64 (.63)	36	39	28	15						
6. Promotion potential	3.60 (.70)	51	45	31	20	29					
7. Childcare concerns	3.05 (1.30)	24	ns	19	42	ns	12				
8. Travel	2.86 (.97)	52	42	33	23	21	37	ns			
9. Quarters	2.84 (1.10)	44	33	38	34	25	33	31	37		
10. Assigned post	2.98 (.94)	21	33	29	28	16	25	15	29	31	
11. Retention intentions	3.14 (1.50)	43	21	15	ns	18	35	ns	18	18	ns

Note: Decimals are omitted; all reported correlations are significant ($p < .05$).

Table 3

Male Dual Army Career Soldiers:
Means and Intercorrelations of Items in the
Army Satisfaction, Dual Career/Family Concerns Regressions

<u>Variables</u>	Mean (S.D.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Years in service	9.06 (6.51)								
2. Off/Enl status	.51 (.87)	ns							
3. Satisfaction with Army	2.83 (.55)	ns	21						
4. Army Accomodation of dual career couples	2.80 (.73)	ns	ns	ns					
5. Sat. with Army views of pregnancy	2.55 (.76)	ns	ns	38	ns				
6. Spouse career support	3.75 (.53)	ns	16	19	ns	ns			
7. Lose career opportunity	2.51 (.92)	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns		
8. Children suffer	2.55 (.92)	-19	ns	-25	ns	-17	ns	ns	
9. Retention intentions	3.96 (1.46)	34	21	38	ns	ns	23	ns	-21

Note: Decimals are omitted; all reported correlations are significant ($p < .05$).

Table 4

Female Dual Army Career Soldiers:
Means and Intercorrelations of Items in the
Army Satisfaction, Dual Career/Family Concerns Regressions

<u>Variables</u>	Mean (S.D.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Years in service	5.92 (4.00)								
2. Off/Enl status	.55 (.90)	ns							
3. Satisfaction with Army	2.68 (.55)	13	26						
4. Army Accomodation of dual career couples	2.79 (.68)	ns	11	19					
5. Sat. with Army views of pregnancy	2.26 (.79)	ns	ns	31	12				
6. Spouse career support	3.58 (.71)	ns	11	19	ns	ns			
7. Lose career opportunity	2.46 (.86)	ns	ns	-15	-12	-23	ns		
8. Children suffer	2.60 (1.00)	ns	ns	-31	-17	-16	ns	27	
9. Retention intentions	3.15 (1.46)	40	19	42	26	19	12	-11	-29

Note: Decimals are omitted; all reported correlations are significant ($p < .05$).

Table 5

Summary of Stepwise Regressions of Retention Intentions
on Career Decision Factors (Importance Items)
for Dual Army Career Men

<u>Variable Entered</u>	R	R ²	Change in R ²	Sig. of change	Bivariate r
Pay, benefits	.35	.12	.12	.000	.35
Assigned post	.40	.16	.03	.001	-.08
Pregnancy concerns	.42	.18	.02	.01	-.09
Army lifestyle	.45	.20	.02	.01	.25
Travel	.46	.21	.01	.04	.15

Note: Adjusted total R²=.21; N=254

Table 6

Summary of Stepwise Regressions of Retention Intentions
on Career Decision Factors (Importance Items)
for Dual Army Career Women

<u>Variable Entered</u>	R	R ²	Change in R ²	Sig. of change	Bivariate r
Pay, benefits	.43	.19	.19	.000	.43
Pregnancy concerns	.47	.22	.03	.001	-.07
Promotion potential	.49	.24	.03	.001	.35
Assigned post	.51	.26	.02	.01	-.04

Note: Adjusted total R²=.25; N=290

Table 7

Summary of Stepwise Regressions of Retention Intentions
on Army Satisfaction and Career/Family Concern Items
for Dual Army Career Men

<u>Variable Entered</u>	R	R ²	Change in R ²	Sig. of change	Bivariate r
Army satisfaction	.38	.14	.14	.000	.38
Spouse support	.41	.17	.03	.01	.23

Note: Adjusted total R²=.16; N=222.

Table 8

Summary of Stepwise Regressions of Retention Intentions
on Army Satisfaction and Career/Family Concern Items
for Dual Army Career Women

<u>Variable Entered</u>	R	R ²	Change in R ²	Sig. of change	Bivariate r
Army satisfaction	.42	.18	.18	.000	.42
Army accomodates	.46	.21	.03	.001	.26
Children suffer when both in Army	.48	.23	.02	.01	-.29

Note: Adjusted total R²=.22; N=250.

Table 9

Summary of Stepwise Regressions of Retention Intentions
on Career Decision Factors (Importance Items)
for Dual Army Career Men,
Controlling for Time in Service and Officer/Enlisted Status

<u>Variable Entered</u>	R	R ²	Change in R ²	Sig. of change	Bivariate r
Years in service	.34	.11	.11	.000	.34
Off./Enl. status	.41	.17	.05	.000	.21
Pay, benefits	.52	.27	.11	.000	.35
Assigned post	.54	.29	.02	.01	-.08
Pregnancy concerns	.55	.30	.01	.04	-.09
Travel	.56	.32	.01	.04	.15
Army lifestyle	.57	.33	.01	.05	.25

Note: Adjusted total R²=.31; N=252.

Table 10

Summary of Stepwise Regressions of Retention Intentions
 on Career Decision Factors (Importance Items)
 for Dual Army Career Women,
 Controlling for Time in Service and Officer/Enlisted Status

<u>Variable Entered</u>	R	R ²	Change in R ²	Sig. of change	Bivariate r
Years in service	.40	.16	.16	.000	.40
Off./Enl. status	.44	.19	.03	.001	.19
Pay, benefits	.58	.34	.15	.000	.43
Promotion potential	.61	.37	.03	.000	.35
Pregnancy concerns	.62	.39	.01	.02	-.07

Note: Adjusted total R²=.38; N=288.

Table 11

Summary of Stepwise Regressions of Retention Intentions
 on Army Satisfaction and Career/Family Concern Items
 for Dual Army Career Men,
 Controlling for Time in Service and Officer/Enlisted Status

<u>Variable Entered</u>	R	R ²	Change in R ²	Sig. of change	Bivariate r
Years in service	.34	.11	.11	.000	.34
Off./Enl. Status	.41	.17	.05	.000	.21
Army satisfaction	.51	.26	.09	.000	.38
Spouse support	.52	.27	.02	.05	.23

Note: Adjusted total R²=.26; N=222.

Table 12

Summary of Stepwise Regressions of Retention Intentions
 on Army Satisfaction and Career/Family Concern Items
 for Dual Army Career Women,
 Controlling for Time in Service and Officer/Enlisted Status

<u>Variable Entered</u>	R	R ²	Change in R ²	Sig. of change	Bivariate r
Years in service	.40	.16	.16	.000	.40
Off./Enl. status	.44	.19	.03	.002	.19
Army satisfaction	.55	.30	.11	.000	.42
Off./Enl. status (Variable removed)	.55	.30	-.007	.13	.19
Army accomodates	.57	.32	.03	.003	.26
Children suffer when both in Army	.58	.34	.02	.01	-.29

Note: Adjusted total R²=.33; N=250.